

Range extension of *Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum* den Hartog, 1980 in the eastern Atlantic

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ABSTRACT

The corallimorpharian *Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum* den Hartog, 1980 is reported from São Tomé and Príncipe Islands and from Madeira Island, greatly extending its known range in the eastern Atlantic. Its presence at Madeira Island probably is a recent phenomenon, possibly due to global warming.

Key words: Corallimorpharia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Gulf of Guinea, Madeira

RESUMEN

Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum den Hartog, 1980 se cita por primera vez para las islas de Sao Tomé y Príncipe en el Golfo de Guinea y también para Madeira. Esto supone una ampliación considerable de su rango de distribución en el Atlántico nororiental. Su presencia en Madeira parece ser un fenómeno reciente que podría estar relacionado con el calentamiento global.

Palabras clave: Corallimorpharia, Santo Tomé y Príncipe, Golfo de Guinea, Madeira.

1. REPORT

DEN HARTOG (1980) described *Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum* from the Caribbean Sea (Saba, Curacao, Venezuela, and Colombia). FAUTIN (2011) synonymized *Pseudocorynactis* with *Corynactis* but OCAÑA ET AL., (2017) reinstated the genus. The species *Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum* den Hartog, 1980 is also known from the Canary Islands (DEN HARTOG, OCAÑA & BRITO 1993, OCAÑA & DEN HARTOG 2003) and

the Cape Verde Islands (WIRTZ 2001). A colour photo of the species, from Tenerife, Canary Islands, can be seen in WIRTZ & DEBELIUS (2003: 65) and at <http://tolweb.org/onlinecontributors/app;jsessionid=76DB5A8B638990A788DC39B57901DE14?page=ViewImageData&service=external&sp=25903>.

The animals were observed and photographed during the night while SCUBA diving at the following sites:

Bom Bom Islet, Principe Island: 01°41'N, 07°24'E; 8 meters. Lagoa Azul, São Tomé Island: 0°24'N, 6°37'E; 13 meters. In both sites only single individuals were noticed. A formal-preserved specimen of *Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum* from Lagoa Azul, São Tomé Island, was sent to Dr. OSCAR OCAÑA at Museo del Mar, Ceuta, Spain.

Canico, Madeira Island: 32°38'N, 16°49'E; 14 meters; Three individuals were extending from cracks in the rock face with only a few cm distances between each other.

To find *Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum* in the Gulf of Guinea was to be expected. Tropical amphi-Atlantic species probably cross the Atlantic via the Equatorial Undercurrent (SCHELTEMA 1971, 1995, MUSS *et al.* 2001, WIRTZ 2001, WIRTZ 2003). Any tropical amphi-Atlantic species recorded from the Cape Verde Islands can therefore also be expected in the Gulf of Guinea.

To find *Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum* at Madeira Island comes as a surprise. In more than 1000 SCUBA dives along the south coast of Madeira, from 1984 to 2017, the first author has never seen this species. It most likely is a recent arrival, possibly due to global warming. The three individuals of *P. caribbeorum* found close together at Canico probably originated through vegetative reproduction of a single founding individual. Looking at the image, with the basal discs inside the crevices, the connection among two of the polyps can not be assured but nor rejected.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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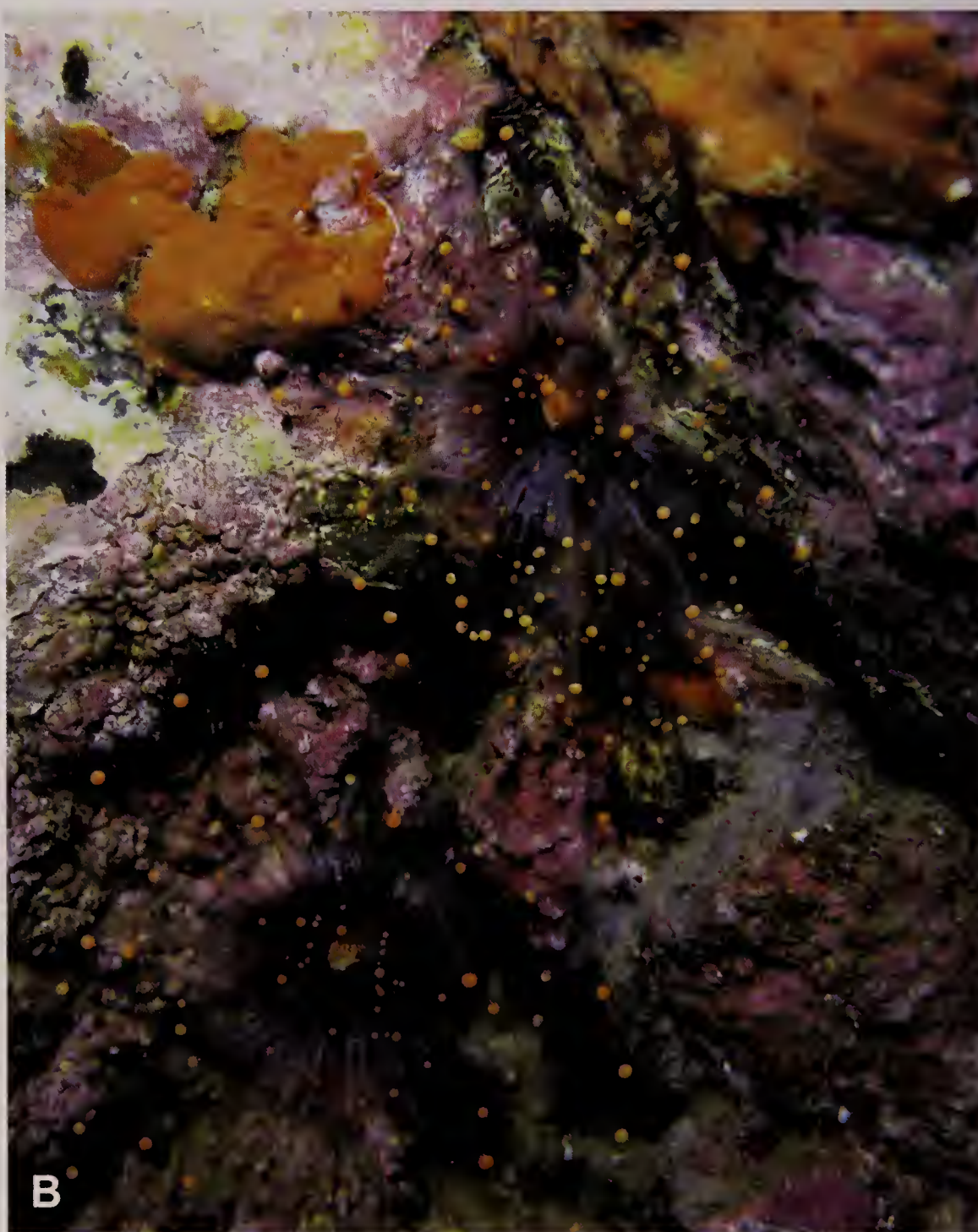


Fig. 1.- A: *Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum* in Lagoa Azul, São Tomé Island (photo Luiz Rocha);
B: *Pseudocorynactis caribbeorum* from Madeira Island.